Guerrillas Held by Costa Rica

Chicago Daily News Service

SAN JOE'S, Costa Rica—Thirty guerrillas dressed in olive green fatigue uniforms are being held in the small Pacific port of Galfito after their capture by Costa Rican troops guarding the frontier with troubled Panama.

Lt. Col. Marino Donato, commander of the Costa Rican Civil Guard, said the men apparently were followers of ousted Panamanian President Arnulfo Arias. The men said they were members of one of three guerrilla bands operating in Panama's Chiriqui Province adjacent to the frontier, Donato said.

They apparently were surrounded by Panamanian National Guardsmen and fled into Costa Rica to avoid capture, he said. The men were not armed and there was no violence.

Donato, who called the men guerrillas, said they told authorities they had hidden their arms in Panama before fleeing across the border.

Donato said the guerrillas were captured near the small town of La Melizas by troops sent to reinforce frontier posts last week.

There were persistent reports in Panama last week of violence in Chiriqui, an Arias stronghold. All were denied by the Panamanian National Guard. The Costa Rican press, in dispatches from the border region, also has reported some minor violence in Chiriqui.

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